

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

Please substitute the attached replacement sheets for Figures 1 and 10 of the drawings as originally filed.

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended.

Figures 1 and 10 have been revised to address the objections. Regarding the objection to Figures 2, 5, 6, and 11 under 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(o), Applicant sees no reason to amend the drawings as filed. Applicant understands that, according to 37 C.F.R. § 1.87(o), suitable descriptive legends may be required by the Examiner where necessary for understanding of the drawing. However, standard schematic symbols have been used in these figures, which are also clearly described in the specification. Thus, additional legends are not seen as necessary for the understanding of the above-mentioned figures. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to Figures 2, 5, 6, and 11 be withdrawn.

The claims have been editorially revised to address alleged informalities. Claim 6 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

The outstanding rejection of independent Claims 1 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully traversed. Claims 1 and 7 recite elements of Applicant's invention that clearly are neither taught nor suggested by the allegedly admitted prior art (AAPA). For example, Claim 1 recites a

return path for sending the scan test data output from a scan flip-flop placed at a closest position to the first clock buffer in the first scan chain to a scan flip-flop placed at a furthermost position from the second clock buffer in the second scan chain. Claim 7 recites that a first clock buffer is configured such that the distance from the first clock buffer to the other end of a plurality of first flip-flops is shorter than the distance from the first clock buffer to the one end of the plurality of first flip-flops and that a second clock buffer is configured such that the distance from the second clock buffer to the other end of the plurality of second flip-flops is shorter than the distance from the second clock buffer to the one end of the plurality of second flip-flops.

The Office contends that Claims 1 and 7 involve mere duplication of essential working parts of the AAPA. This contention is clearly erroneous. First of all, there is no suggestion in the AAPA, or elsewhere in the prior art, to duplicate anything in the AAPA in a manner relevant to Applicant's invention. Moreover, merely duplicating parts in the AAPA would not result in Applicant's invention as particularly claimed. Mere duplication of a scan chain circuit as discussed in the AAPA would result in a structure having a multistage configuration. But such duplication

would fail to produce a return path for sending scanned test data output from a scanned flip flop placed in a closest position to a first clock buffer in the first scanned chain to a scanned flip flop placed in a furthermost position from a second clock buffer in the second scanned chain as set forth in Claim 1. Nor would such duplication produce a configuration where a first clock buffer is configured such that the distance from the first clock buffer to the other end of a plurality of first flip flops is shorter than the distance from the first clock buffer to the one end of the plurality of first flip flops and where a second clock buffer is configured such that the distance from the second clock buffer to the other end of a plurality of second flip flops is shorter than the distance from the second clock buffer to the one end of the plurality of second flip flops as set forth in Claim 7.

The other cited references, which were not applied to Claims 1 and 7, fail to overcome the above-discussed deficiencies of the AAPA with regard to Claims 1 and 7. Accordingly, Claims 1 and 7, and their respective dependents, distinguish patentably from the art of record and should now be allowed.

Applicant respectfully requests that this case be passed to issue.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (XA-10062) any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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September 7, 2006

FIG. 1

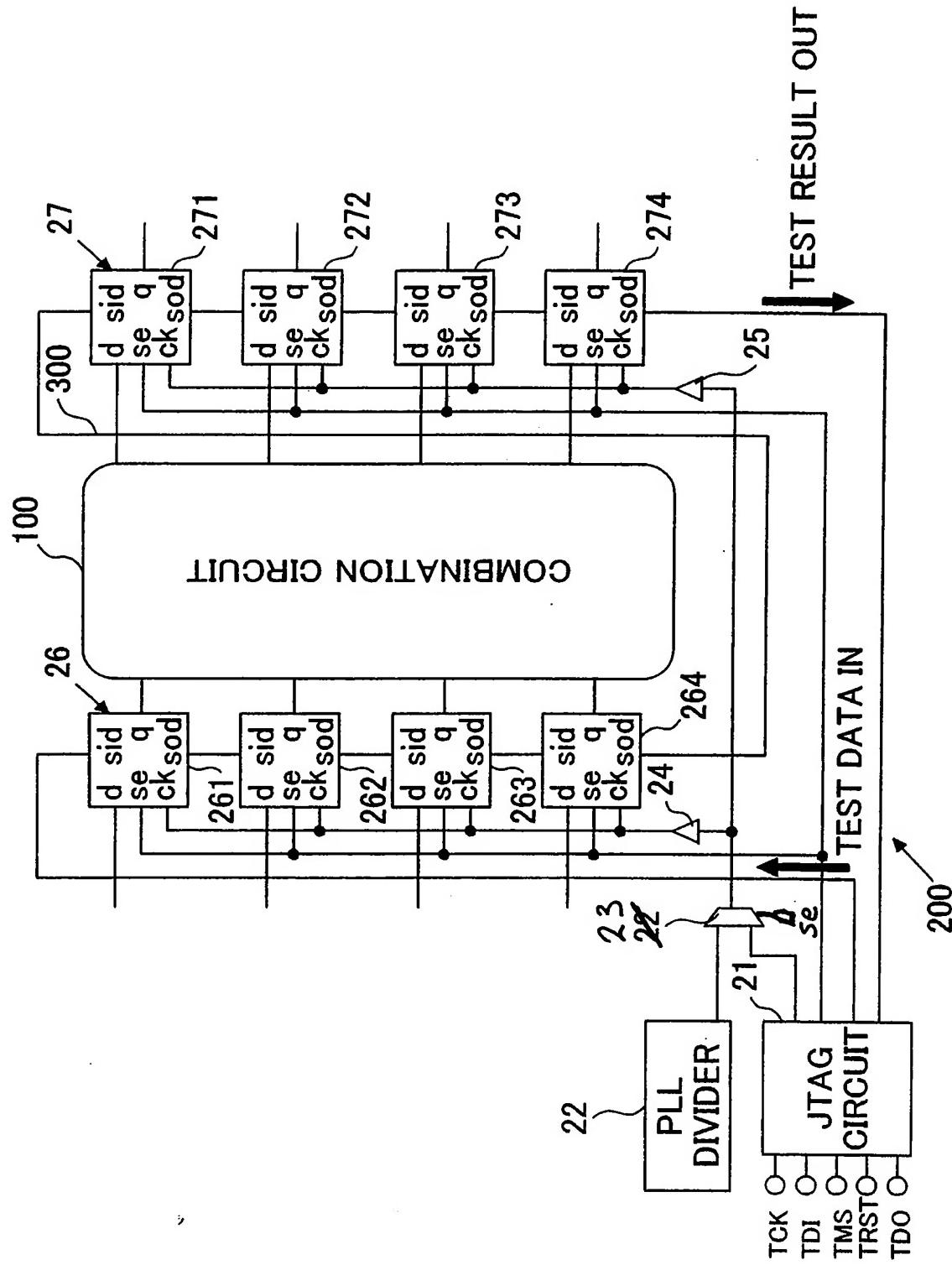


FIG. 10

